

January 27, 1958

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Dear Beets:

It was a little difficult to answer the questionnaire because I have what may be unorthodox views concerning the underlying assumption. These are founded partly on my general investigatorial experience, partly from my term on the genetics panel of the old COG.

The ACS certainly performed a very useful service just after the war in supporting basic research programs. At the present time, however, it very largely duplicates the efforts of the NSF and NIH in this field. Part of my own preference for dealing with these agencies is their lack of commitment of any kind for ultimate application in any specific disease. I realize that cancer research administration is hard put to suggest any more likely approach than a similar basic emphasis. But it surprises me that ~~ix~~ the ACS should sustain any very serious interest in such a duplication, when there are so many things it can do which are beyond the vision and policies of the federal agencies. I have in mind, of course, the career investigatorships, the institutional grants, and so on. It could also do yeoman's service in providing smaller special grants on the shortest notice for 'emergency situations'. If the ACS stays in basic research at all, it can make a unique contribution along these several lines.

I can even question this last premise, mainly on the personal predilection that the ACS did lead the way in popular orientation to, and the necessary education for, basic research, but that its particular method for financing it is much less sound than the federal agencies'. I do not see that basic research workers in the U.S. would be very much distressed if the ACS were to pull out of the picture altogether, in the course of time, and this would pretty much remove the questions and possible feelings of inconsistency that underlie the present questionnaire.

I realize that I am hardly qualified to tell the ACS how to pursue its basic policies, and that these will (and should) hardly be credited as more than one man's opinion.

Sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg